

**WILLIAMSBURG PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
2005 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WORK SESSION #3
Tuesday, February 9, 2004**

A work session of the Williamsburg Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, February 9, 6:30 p.m., in Conference Room 3A, Municipal Building, 401 Lafayette Street.

ATTENDANCE AND CALL TO ORDER

Present were Commissioners Freiling, Young, Hertzler, McBeth, Pons and Smith. Commissioner Friend was absent. Also present was Planning Director Nester, Zoning Administrator Murphy, and Assistant City Manager Miller.

Mr. Freiling called the meeting to order.

OPEN FORUM

David Kranbuehl, 201 Harrison Avenue, spoke concerning the Capital Improvement Program. He said that one of the most important expenditures is in the residential neighborhoods, and that there are no specific items for improving these neighborhoods in the CIP. He noted that money is appropriated for some low and moderate income neighborhoods, but that funding is also needed for other residential areas. He mentioned the possibility of funding to buy up problem properties and re-sell them for owner-occupied housing.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Mr. Nester said that a draft letter from the Commission to the City Manager was in the packet, and requested comments and suggestions from Commissioners. Mr. Pons agreed that a program for revitalizing residential neighborhoods with capital improvements should be developed. Mr. Freiling suggested that since there is not a recommended plan at this time, a general reference to the program could be made, with the details to be worked out in the Comprehensive Plan update. Mr. Nester said that he would add this item to the draft of the Commission's letter to the City Manager, and that it would be in the packet for the February 18 meeting.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Assistant City Manager Jodi Miller discussed the annual Citizen Survey program, discussing the following specific points:

- It was started in 1995 and is conducted annually

- Its goals are to determine how city services are perceived by citizens and educate them about city services where possible, and to glean information from citizens on how to improve those services.
- The survey is given to 300 randomly selected citizens.
- Citizens have been most pleased with: Landscaping/Beautification, City Parks and Recreation, Improvements in Merchants Square, and Planning & Building Inspection Staff
- Items identified for improvement include: Controlling Growth & Development, Code Enforcement-property maintenance/rental inspections, Parking Availability and Enforcement, Create a More Pedestrian Friendly Community-sidewalks, bike paths, green space, More Shopping and Entertainment, and Underground Wiring

A discussion of the Citizen Survey followed Ms. Miller's presentation. Mr. Hertzler said that it was valuable to know that the surveys had identified growth as a major concern. Mr. Pons said that he would like to see a greater sample surveyed, including student residents.

Mr. Nester said that the student survey issue is being addressed by this year's Sharpe Community Scholars Partnership project, which is a survey of William & Mary students as a part of the Comprehensive Plan process. The students introduced themselves: Jon Hemler of Williamsburg, Cara Lodigiani of Florida, Colin Verbesey of New York, Nicholas Walsh of Harrisonburg, and Cathy Young of Richmond. Jon Hemler served as spokesperson for the group, and reviewed the survey project, stating that surveys would be sent to all students via email. He said that the survey results will create a better understanding of student perceptions of the City. Mr. Nester noted that this is the first time students have been surveyed as a part of the Comprehensive Plan process. The discussion continued between the students and the Commission.

Commissioners had several suggestions for additional or modified questions in the survey:

- Why do students want to live off-campus?
- Would students be willing to live in student-oriented off-campus housing?
- Question #9, How do you get to class?, could ask for a percentage breakdown for each mode of transportation.
- A question could ask how do you get to school, and then how do you get between classes
- A question could ask if you work or volunteer in the community
- One of the selections for entertainment (#17) could be "off-campus house"
- Question #10, Have you used the college bus service?, could ask if no, why not

At the conclusion of the discussion, both Commissioners and students felt that it had been a helpful step in the finalization of the survey questions.

OPEN FORUM

Tom Mainor, 506 Newport Avenue, stated his concern with the proposed changes to rental regulation legislation in Richmond, and said that annual inspection is essential to maintaining the City's rental housing stock. He also said that underground wiring is important, and should have a long term cost benefit to Dominion Power. On the same subject he said that it was impossible to get 100% of the people on a street to agree to an underground wiring petition.

Assistant City Manager Miller updated the Commission on the changes to rental regulation legislation (the Drake bill). She said that a compromise version of the legislation had been agreed upon, which will preserve the major aspects of the City's rental inspection program, but will eliminate the registration requirement and mandate inspections every four years. She also said that legislation is under consideration for a City charter amendment that would only require 75% of the property owners in an area to agree to an underground wiring petition.

OTHER

Mr. Freiling said that Mr. Nester made a presentation to City Council on the Comprehensive Plan update process this afternoon, and that City Council indicated that they would like to have further discussions with the Commission as the plan progresses.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Paul Freiling, Chairman
Williamsburg Planning Commission